

# Newsletter

Volume 2 Issue 3



Singanallur Lake, Coimbatore

© TNBB

## CONTENTS

Access and Benefit Sharing • P. 1

Community Interactions & Insights • P. 2

Field Assessments & SBSAP • P. 5-6

SBSAP • P. 6

Visitors to TNBB & Interactions • P. 7

Addressing Emerging BMCs Issues • P. 8

Did You Know • P. 9

Communications • P. 9

News from Other States • P. 9



## ACCESS AND BENEFIT SHARING

### ABS database in the making

July 2022

To understand various uses pattern of the biological resource by companies in Tamil Nadu, the Board, upon the suggestion of Dr. Arivvudai Nambi, Member, ABS Expert Committee, has prepared a database with details from ABS Form-I applications received in last several months. A set of variables was formulated and data corresponding to the variables were extracted from the records. The technical team at the Board is working on analyzing and presenting the data. The insights obtained from the analysis will be used to create better strategies for conservation as well as for ABS compliance by industries.



### ABS expert committee meeting

August 2022

The Tamil Nadu Biodiversity Board organized an ABS expert committee meeting on 17 August 2022 to process Form-I applications received by the Board and from NBA. Members present at the meeting included Dr. Shekhar Kumar Niraj, PCCF and Secretary, TNBB, Dr. D. Narasimhan, Dr. Arivvudai Nambi, Dr. S. Elumalai, and Wildlife Warden, Chennai. A total of 15 applications were processed and approved subject to conditions.

#### Key suggestions by Committee members

- General profile of various companies available online could be used to cross-check data provided in the application.
- ABS funds could be provided as seed fund to priority BMCs for their functioning.
- The Board may create Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the utilization of ABS funds in which funds to BMCs may be included. The money could be channelized to each sector like research, BMC functioning, etc.
- ABS funds may also be used for undertaking research studies and for publications.
- Field officers may be empowered to collect data and carry out field studies.
- Public-funded institutions may be approached for database creation and analysis.
- Notable contributors in the field of biodiversity conservation may be incentivized through awards such as Best BMC, Best Conservationist, etc.
- The Board may impose fines / penalties on those individuals or entities who don't comply with the provisions of BDA 2002.

Applications received **2**

Applications processed **15**

Agreements signed **4**

Amount received  
**₹ 58373**

## COMMUNITY INTERACTIONS AND INSIGHTS

# Interacting with BMCs in Villupuram, Krishnagiri, Dharmapuri and Coimbatore districts

August 2022

A team from the Tamil Nadu Biodiversity Board (TNBB) headed by the Secretary, Dr. Shekhar Kumar Niraj, visited BMCs in the districts of Villupuram, Krishnagiri, Dharmapuri and Coimbatore. The team interacted with members of Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs), Block Development Officers (BDOs), Village Administrative Officers (VAOs), and the general public. The visits were undertaken to gauge the understanding and implementation of the Biological Diversity Act 2002 (BDA 2002) including the functioning of BMCs and the awareness on People's Biodiversity Registers (PBRs), Biodiversity Heritage Sites (BHS) and the Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) mechanism. A total of 6 blocks and 26 village panchayats were covered in the assessment.

**Table shows the schedule of visits and areas covered**

Date & Time	District	Block	Panchayat
3 August 2022, 3:00 PM	Villupuram	Vanur	Bommiyarpalayam, Irumbai, Agasampatty, Thiruchitrambalam, Rayapudhupakkam
11 August 2022, 3:00 PM	Dharmapuri	Nallampalli	Boothanahalli, Kammampatti, Palayampudur, Sivadi, Thoppur
12 August 2022, 12:00 PM	Krishnagiri	Thally	Belagondapalli, Kalugondapalli, Komaranapalli
		Hosur	Kothagondapalli, Poonapalli
13 August 2022, 3:30 PM		Uthangarai	Kondampatty, Marampatty, Mittapalli, Moondrampatti, Reddipatty
26 August 2022, 11:30 AM	Coimbatore	Karamadai	Kalampalayam, Kemmarampalayam, Marudur, Thekkampatti, Tholampalayam, Velliangadu

**Villupuram district**

PCCF &amp; Secretary interacting with participants.



Participants sharing bio-resource knowledge.

**Coimbatore district**

Participants engaging in the post-session PBR activity.



Mr. Ajeeth explaining important aspects of BDA 2002.

**Dharmapuri district**

Mr. Ajeeth explaining about BDA 2002 &amp; BMCs.



Participants present during the interactive session.

**Krishnagiri district**

PCCF &amp; Secretary interacting with participants.



Participants sharing bio-resource knowledge.

### Key Findings

- Participants were not aware of the purpose of the meeting besides the information that a meeting was being conducted by the Forest Department at the District Forest Office.
- BDOs and VAOs were not aware of the BDA 2002 and about BMCs and their functioning before the communication for the meeting was sent to their office.
- Although BMCs were constituted two years ago, they are not functional.
- BMC members were also not aware of their membership to the BMC as well as its role and functions.
- Most villagers did not know whether bio-resources such as plants and herbs with medicinal properties were being collected by industries from their villages.
- There was no awareness among the participants on the concept of biodiversity (in Tamil also), BDA 2002 and its components, sustainable use of biological resources.
- Stakeholder departments do not work in synergy with each other.
- The link between community and markets is missing and hence people, especially those living close to forest areas, are unable to market their products and fetch a fair price.
- Lack of direct communication channel between TNBB and BMCs.



### Suggestions & Requests

- Participants requested that awareness on biodiversity, BDA 2002 and BMCs be given, first to the officials of respective departments, and then to Panchayat and BMC members and the general public.
- IEC activities (information, education, communication) may be carried out for creating awareness. Visuals including videos and documentaries as well as social media must be used for the same.
- The participants requested that guidance and assistance be provided for marketing the products sold by tribal villagers along with permanent facilities for selling the products. The BMC may support in marketing the products sold by the local community.
- Information materials including specific pamphlets addressing aspects such as biodiversity, BDA 2002, BMCs, PBRs, ABS and BHS must be made available.
- Assistance in the technical aspects of PBR preparation, such as providing scientific names of species, must be provided.
- Increased support from the Forest Department would be beneficial.

### Changing Strategies

- Massive state-wide assessment of BMCs through field visits and evaluation.
- Comprehensive and practical training for BMCs in the state.
- Incentivizing BMCs with seed money for operationalization.
- Updating PBRs with people's participation & technical expertise.
- Capturing traditional knowledge related to biological resources in PBR.
- Engaging technical expertise for updating PBRs.
- Preparing short, easy and attractive pamphlets / brochures.
- Structural changes to empower Forest Department in BMC functioning.
- Creating direct communication channels between TNBB and BMCs.



## FIELD ASSESSMENTS

### Evaluating a promising future BHS

August 2022

The TNBB team headed by Dr. Shekhar Kumar Niraj, PCCF and Secretary, identified two sites in the districts of Villupuram and Coimbatore for their potential to be declared as Biodiversity Heritage Sites (BHS). The team also visited the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU), Coimbatore which is proposed as a BHS.

#### Villupuram district



This site in Bommiyarpalayam village near Auroville beach (Villupuram district) is unique in many ways because of the natural growth of a specific wild sesame plant known as *Kaattu ellu* (*Sesamum prostratum*). The plant was earlier found in large numbers but due to various factors, it has been reduced to a few stretches along the coastline.

Common Name: Indian Sesame Oil Plant ; Scientific Name: *Sesamum prostratum*

Local Name (in Tamil): கார்ட்டு எள்ளு (*Kaattu ellu*)

Distribution: Sandy areas near sea and wastelands in peninsular India and Sri Lanka.

Uses: It is used as a medicinal plant in Ayurveda and Siddha medicinal systems.

Economic value: Wild species of sesame are reported to have high harvest index and other yield components, and high nutritional quality (high oil and protein, high sesamin and sesamolin contents, reduced anti-nutritional factors and oxalic acid in seeds) (Pathak, N. et al., 2014).

#### Coimbatore district

Singanallur Lake (Coimbatore), spread over an area of about 288 hectares, is home to rich biodiversity with more than 180 bird species. Initially at a depth of 13.5 ft., the lake is now at 5-6 ft. due to siltation. There are also issues of encroachments, illegal fishing and incidents of birds being chased away.

Dr. Shekhar at the Singanallur Lake.



Dr. Shekhar (2nd from R) with professors of TNAU.

The Tamil Nadu Biodiversity Board has also formulated a draft on the “Rules for the Management and Conservation of Biodiversity Heritage Sites in Tamil Nadu” in accordance with Section 37(2) of the Biological Diversity Act 2002. It has been submitted to the Government for review.

## Field validation of IBA 2023 site: IIT-Madras (Chennai)

*August 2022*

The India Biodiversity Awards (IBA), is a biennial initiative by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), the National Biodiversity Authority (NBA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). It felicitates individuals, communities and institutions for their contribution towards the conservation of biodiversity. The awards are distributed under different categories, namely Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological Resources, Incentivizing Access and Benefit Sharing, Best Biodiversity Management Committee, and Best People's Biodiversity Register.

For 2022-23, the Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT-M) had applied for the Awards under the category 'Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological Resources'. The institution was shortlisted for field validation by the Jury constituted by the National Biodiversity Authority. Dr. Neelima Jerath, Director of Pushpa Gujral Science City (Chandigarh) and Mrs. Vishaish Uppal, WWF (New Delhi) visited the IIT – Madras campus on 25 August 2022 along with Mr. Ajeeth A N, Technical Executive and Ms. Varsha S, NBA Intern, from TNBB. The members interacted with officials at IIT-M and visited different areas inside the campus to see the initiatives taken. A report of the field validation was prepared and submitted to NBA.

### STATE BIODIVERSITY STRATEGIES AND ACTION PLAN

## TN-SBSAP Preparation: Preliminary meeting and White Paper drafting

*July 2022*

Each State is required to prepare a long-term State Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (SBSAP) in line with the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, National Biodiversity Targets and the Post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. For this purpose, the SBSAP Committee at TNBB met on 18 July 2022 to discuss the pathway to preparing an SBSAP for Tamil Nadu. SBSAPs of other states were reviewed and the probable structure of TN-SBSAP was discussed. The meeting concluded with the decision of preparing a White Paper that would act as a roadmap while preparing the TN-SBSAP.

*August 2022*

In furtherance to the preliminary meeting on 18 July, the progress of work of the Committee was reviewed on 1 August and 30 August. It was decided that a thorough stakeholder analysis would be conducted by the technical team at TNBB with Dr. Manjula and Dr. Nambi, Members (SBSAP Committee) beginning to write the introductory chapters of the SBSAP.

*September 2022*

As part of the White Paper preparation phase, a stakeholder analysis was made by Mr. Ajeeth and Ms. Varsha from TNBB in consultation with the PCCF & Secretary, TNBB. The White Paper is currently in progress.

## VISITORS TO TNBB & INTERACTIONS

### 3rd Batch of NBA-UNDP BSIP interns visit TNBB

July 2022

The National Biodiversity Authority (NBA), the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have been offering the Biodiversity Samrakshan Internship Program (BSIP) since 2020. The interns of 2021-22 batch (3rd cycle) visited the Tamil Nadu Biodiversity Board on 19 July 2022 as part of their training program. Dr. Shekhar Kumar Niraj, IFS, PCCF and Secretary, TNBB gave a short presentation which was followed by an interactive session. Thiru. Sanjay Kumar Srivastava, IFS (Retd), Ex-PCCF and Board Member, TNBB and Thiru. Vigender Singh Malik IFS, PCCF and CPD, TBGP, also interacted with the interns.



Dr. Shekhar interacting with the interns.



Interns pose for a photo inside TNBB complex.

### Meeting with JICA team

August-September 2022

Delegates from Japan visited the TBGP campus as part of the JICA project on 31 August and 3 September 2022. Dr. Shekhar Kumar Niraj IFS, PCCF & Secretary presented the current scenario of implementation of BDA 2002 in the state of Tamil Nadu and how the JICA project could be consider collaborating with TNBB in implementing the mandates of the Board. Other senior officials of the Forest Department were also present during the meeting.



Dr. Shekhar (1st from right), IFS, PCCF & Secretary, TNBB, presenting to the JICA team.



## ADDRESSING EMERGING BMCs ISSUES

### BMCs: constitution and status of functioning in Tamil Nadu.

Section 41 of the Biological Diversity Act 2002 mandates every local body to constitute a Biodiversity Management Committee (BMC) within its area for promoting conservation and sustainable use and documenting biodiversity. Rules 20 and 21 of the Tamil Nadu Biological Diversity Rules 2017 detail the constitution, roles and responsibilities of a BMC.

The constitution of a BMC includes 7 members nominated by the local body and out of which one is the chairperson whose tenure is 3 years. Out of the 7 members, one-third should be women and 18% from the Schedule Castes/Tribes community. They should reside within the jurisdiction of the local body and be in the latest voter's list. The tenure of the committee is co-terminus with the local body tenure. The committee should meet once in 3 months and 4 times a year.

The BMC has a major role in preparing People's Biodiversity Registers (PBRs), managing Biodiversity Heritage Sites (BHS), regulating access to bio-resources and associated Traditional Knowledge (TK), and ensuring sustainable use of bio-resources.

#### Status of BMCs in Tamil Nadu

BMCs in Tamil Nadu were initially constituted at the Block level and was completed at all other levels in 2020 and the state has a total of 13,608 BMCs at present. However, the awareness on and functioning of BMCs is poor in the state. In order to assess the real issues faced by BMCs in the state, a team from TNBB consisting of Dr. Shekhar Kumar Niraj, IFS, PCCF and Secretary, A. Kalaiarasan, AO (Retd) , Ajeeth A N, Technical Executive, and Varsha S, NBA-UNDP BSIP Intern visited 42 BMCs (33 panchayats and 9 blocks) in 5 districts from June-August 2022. The team prepared an evaluation format consisting of 16 variables and scored each variable based on a scale of 1 (Nil) to 5 (Excellent).

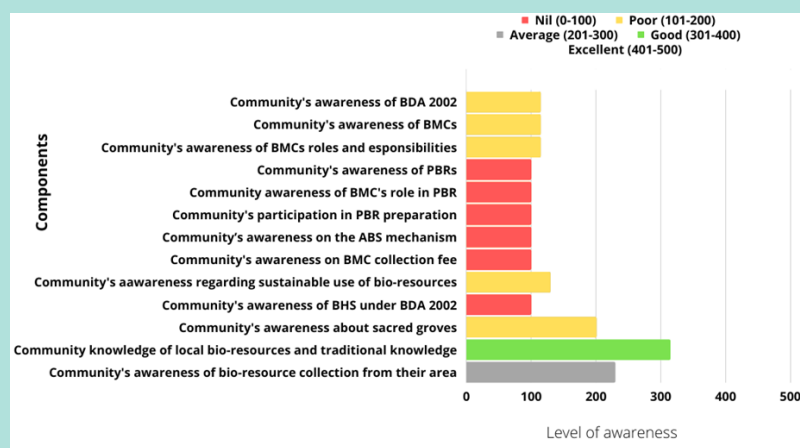


Chart depicting the results of the assessment on awareness and functioning of BMCs.

#### Key Findings

- There is no awareness on PBRs and the BMC's role in preparing PBRs.
- The community does not have any awareness about the ABS mechanism and the BMC's authority to collect fees for access of bio-resources from companies.
- The community had poor awareness on sacred groves in their area and did not know about the concept of BHS.
- Awareness on BDA 2002, BMCs and its role, and the sustainable use of bio-resources is poor.
- Some members of the community, especially women, had good knowledge of local bio-resources and their uses.
- The community has an average awareness on bio-resource collection by companies from their respective local areas.

## IMPORTANT DAYS (JULY-SEP)

- 1-7 July - Van Mahotsav  
 11 July - Intl. Day for the Conservation of the Mangrove Ecosystem  
 28 July - World Nature Conservation Day  
 29 July - International Tiger Day  
 31 July - World Ranger Day  
 10 Aug - World Lion Day  
 12 Aug - World Elephant Day  
 16 Sep - World Ozone Day

## EDITORIAL TEAM

### Chief Editor

Dr. Shekhar Kumar Niraj, IFS,  
PCCF and Secretary, TNBB

### Executive Editors

- Mr. Ajeeth A N,  
Technical Executive, TNBB
- Ms. Varsha S,  
BSIP Intern, TNBB

### Published by

Tamil Nadu Biodiversity Board,  
TBGP Campus, II Floor,  
Velachery-Tambaram Main  
Road, Nanmangalam,  
Medavakkam Post, Chennai  
600100

Contact No.: 044-22782730  
E-mail: secy.tnbb@tn.gov.in

### Connect with Us



TNBB\_Secy



@tnbb\_secretariat



Tamil Nadu Biodiversity Board

## DID YOU KNOW?

### 'Palmyra Palm' (*Borassus flabellifer*): State tree of Tamil Nadu



**Common Name:** Palmyra Palm  
**Scientific Name:** *Borassus flabellifer*  
**Local Name (in Tamil):** Panaimaram  
**Habitat:** Tropical regions. Coastal belts, agricultural margins, and wastelands.  
**Appearance:** Leaves - large, fan-shaped; Stem - cylindrical, black colour; Fruit - green & circular;  
**Uses:** Sap used as medicine; Palm jaggery used in food; Leaves used to make thatch roofs; Fruit's jelly-like pulp eaten.

Palmyra Palm (*Borassus flabellifer*), state tree of Tamil Nadu.

## COMMUNICATIONS

### Dashboard live on TNBB website

September 2022

The Tamil Nadu Biodiversity Board (TNBB) had recently published a Dashboard on its website. The dashboard provides information on the status of ABS funds, BMC constitution & PBR preparation, and notification of BHS.

## NEWS FROM OTHER STATES



### ASSAM SBB

'District level stakeholder's awareness workshops' on preparation and updation of PBRs for TSGs and BMCs conducted in Karimganj and Cachar districts of Assam in September 2022 in an effort to update and enhance the quality of the PBRs through inputs from stakeholders.

A series of BMC training-cum-awareness programs conducted in Jaipur district in August and September 2022, aimed at building capacity for updating PBRs and ensuring compliance with provisions of BDA 2002 and Rajasthan Biodiversity Rules, 2010.



### RAJASTHAN SBB